

Central Plant Materials Workshop

Executive Summary

The Central Plant Materials Program held a three day workshop in Manhattan, Kansas, November 15-17, 2005, at the Kansas State University Student Union. Harold Klaege, State Conservationist, Salina, Kansas, welcomed the workshop participants and encouraged the plant materials program to continue delivering high quality technology that can be quickly accessed and understood by field offices. Ronald Williams, Director, Central National Technology Support Center (CNTSC), Fort Worth, Texas, challenged the Plant Materials Program to be visionary in addressing emerging needs and to explore new opportunities for the role of plants in bioenergy, nutrient management, and air quality. Robert Escherman, National Program Leader for Plant Materials, Washington, D.C., gave an update on activities surrounding the national plant materials program and explained the significance of the new performance index for Plant Materials Centers (PMCs) and how it will impact future funding.

Jim Ayen, Steve Carmichael, and Bob Ball, State Resource Conservationists; Des Moines, Iowa, Alexandria, Louisiana, and Columbia, Missouri, respectively, gave their perspective on the role of the plant materials program in conservation planning and Farm Implementation.

Bill Kuenstler, Agronomist, CNTSC, explained the importance of different plant parameters PMCs need to focus on during evaluation of various types of plants used in conservation practice standards. Kimberli Stine, National GLCI Coordinator, Fort Worth, Texas, challenged the plant materials personnel to work with the state GLCI coordinator to inform them of plant materials work that impacts grazinglands and to look for opportunities to partner with other groups in developing grazingland technology.

Plant Materials Center Managers gave oral presentations on present and future plant collections, initial evaluation plantings and advanced evaluation plantings and technology being developed at the PMCs in Booneville, Arkansas; Bismarck, North Dakota; Elsberry, Missouri; Manhattan, Kansas; Knox City, Texas; Nacogdoches, Texas; Kingsville, Texas; and Golden Meadow, Louisiana.

Travis Rome, GIS Specialist, Salina, Kansas, gave an overview of Arc GIS and GPS applications for PMCs. He used several examples from data collected at the Manhattan PMC to illustrate how the tools can be used to develop field and plot plans, and other planning activities at the PMC.

Glen Lawson, GIS Specialist, CNTSC, developed a GPS database for each PMC in the central service area. The database included information on elevation, government units, hydrography, hydrologic units, map indexes, ortho imagery, soils, topographic images, transportation, and various image subsets. Plant Materials Center Managers were provided a copy of the GIS database for their PMC. He will also be sending each PMC

an aerial photograph. Glen plans to develop a GIS database for other PMCs in fiscal year 2006.

Jerry Lemunyon, Agronomist, Fort Worth, Texas, challenged the plant materials program to utilize their expertise and knowledge of plants for phytoremediation of contaminated sites. A conservation practice standard could be developed and responsibility given to the plant materials program to maintain. Peter Kulakow, Department of Agronomy, Kansas State University, gave a presentation on a phytoremediation database that he is developing in cooperation with the PLANTS Data Center that could be linked to a phytoremediation practice standard. The database would serve a repository for plant information developed by the plant materials for phytoremediation.

Robert Westover, National Plant Materials Program Public Affairs Specialist, gave helpful tips for PMCs interested in marketing PMC products. John Englert, PMC Manager, Beltsville, Maryland, discussed the significance of the POMS database and expanding future development of the database to effectively and efficiently track progress of the plant materials program.

The Manhattan PMC staff gave the workshop participants a tour of the PMC. A training session was given by Mike Haddock, Science Librarian, Kansas State University, on conducting literature reviews using various search tools available on the Internet.

Joel Douglas, Plant Materials Specialist, CNTSC, gave presentations on the importance of Intercenter Strain Trials in the plant materials program and how the program can play a role in developing technology for forage suitability groups. Joel and Scott Edwards, Plant Materials Specialist, Alexandria, Louisiana, led an open group discussion on innovative approaches to PMC studies. Plant materials personnel were presented with new ideas and challenges for the future.

Breakout sessions for Plant Materials Center Managers, Plant Materials Specialists, and State Resource Conservationists resulted in action items that promoted cooperative PMC studies, sharing ideas and successes for greater operation efficiency, better communication between PMCs and PMSs, and guidance on plant selection to meet conservation practice objectives. These milestones and actions were identified and linked to the NRCS national strategic objectives and goals.